Annual Dinners - What's in a Venue

What influences you to attend, or not to attend the Clubs Annual Dinner? Why do you want to know I hear you cry? Well, your committee has a bit of a dilemma in that there was a significant drop in the number of Members attending the 2005 dinner. Numbers were down from 100+ to less than 90.

This matters in as much as it is getting increasingly difficult to find a venue that can cater for over 100, let alone one that can do a good job. So, when you find a good one you want to use it more than once. The food is only one element of what makes a good venue. Do they have accommodation, can you camp, can you sleep in your camper van? Stirk House, last years venue, has all of these, together with ample space for the AGM and our usual exhibition but there was still a significant drop in turnout. It is in Lancashire but rest easy in the knowledge that it’s in Yorkshire, or rather part of stolen Yorkshire! Perhaps you don’t like the format of the dinner evening.

The committee has always followed the policy of ensuring that every member who wants to attend, can do so rather than book somewhere which takes fewer numbers and then have to exclude someone. To add to the problems, it is now necessary to book dinner venues up to two years ahead. If the trend of attendances of well under 100 is to become the norm it would enable much greater choice. This years AGM and Annual Dinner has already been booked and that for 2007 is about to be booked at Stirk House and shortly the committee will have to sort out arrangements for 2008.

So, please, let any committee member have some feedback, particularly if you were one of the regulars who was absent last year.

Pete Rose
Hon. President

The GG Andrews Fix!

Potholeers and grog, and in particular potholeers and beer, go like bread and butter. The Craven are no exception, to whit the location of our club cottage right next to a pub!!

But what of beer at Gaping Gill? Well in the early years, it was every “man” (person) for him/her self to haul up their own supply, or make the gruelling hike down to Clapham to the pub and usually more gruelling hike back home to GG after a few bevies. It has been known to find the odd pothole reposed in the morning somewhere on the moor with head in cow clap!

Later, the club started offering cans of beer for sale at the Club Marquee which were trucked up with the main GG gear. But when did barrels of beer and kegs start to be hauled up? Rhodes Thompson, a friend and former CPC Life Member (now sadly deceased) once told me a story about the first attempt to take a barrel of beer up to GG to provide draught beer for all those “starving” CPC grog addicts at the annual meet. I believe this was somewhere in the fifties but the precise date is uncertain.

Indeed, a barrel (BIG wooden barrel – no metal kegs in those days) of Yorkshire’s best brown nectar was acquired and trucked up to GG. The journey of this barrel was not uneventful and at one point it rolled down the slope into the beck. After nervous inspection it was pronounced still intact and all preparations made for the big opening night in the

Rhodes Thompson pictured in the 1960s
(Photograph: I. Metcalfe).

Marquee. Rhodes Thompson and, I believe, Fred Pickles, were put in charge as Bar Men for the evening.

Then came the big test – the drawing of the first pint from the barrel. It looked ok, but upon trying the brew, Fred pronounced “IT’S FLAT!! Disaster had struck – all that rolling about and Fell Beck drenching had taken its toll. Meantime, outside the Club Marquee, a substantial queue had formed, eagerly waiting for the bar to open!

What are we going to do? Uttered Fred. Now Rhodes was a resourceful sort of Chap, (painter and decorator from Gargrave who mixed his own
paints, and who had, amongst many distinguished activities, been part of the teams that first descended the Rat Hole, and which dug the Malham Cove/Tarn Dig). I have an idea said Rhodes, and he disappeared up the beck to his tent. After a short while, he returned with a large tin of white powder and a teaspoon, which he proceeded to hide behind the “bar”. He proceeded to draw another pint and popped a teaspoon of the white powder in the beer with a vigorous stir. Eh viola! A perfect head on the brown stuff! Fred had a gulp and declared it a winner. In came the customers, and a great time was had by all.

The only down side the evening’s imbibe? A very well worn track over the moor to, and a long queue at the toilet tent next morning. Andrews salts in fair quantity does that you know!!

Perhaps some of our older membership can shed light on the date of the first barrel of beer at GG, or other information on grog provision. I think there is definitely a definitive story of the history of Grog at CPC GG meets yet to be written!

Ian Metcalfe

A Description Of Ingleborough Cave
Part 8: The Wallows (And Notes On Flood Escape)

(Please note, a minor error crept into Part 7 of the Ingleborough Cave description in CPC Record 82, p.23. For completeness the photograph at the bottom of this page is the wrong way round; it should be rotated clockwise by 90 degrees.) - Oops - Ed

From the furthest point in Far Eastern Bedding Plane (see CPC Record 81 p,11) a very wide low and aqueous passage is entered, extending to left and right. The main stream is flowing in this passage and from this point onwards it is perhaps best to be wearing a wetsuit. To the left is downstream and airspace gradually decreases until a definite sump is met. Divers can continue here via a submerged connection with Secret Stream Passage and also with Chip Slab Cairn (see CPC Record 81, p.10).

Upstream in the wet crawl (i.e. by turning right from the end of Far Eastern Bedding Plane) the airspace also decreases, until the caver is faced with a wide expanse of deep water only some 10 cm or less from the roof in several directions; this is the First Wallows. However the sound of running water ahead encourages commitment and a few metres of exceptionally wet going soon reaches greater airspace and shallower water. The first trap is now sprung, because on the way back the correct route is less obvious – and there’s no sound of running water to aim for. So take careful note of exactly which direction to launch back through this duck before pressing on further.

Shortly afterwards the fast flowing water is found in a short section of stooping passage as the main route sidesteps from the left along a joint. Off to the left here is a low, sharp and uninviting flat out crawl, which leads for about 30 m to the Black Pool (see below). However the main stream is emerging from an easier hands and knees crawl ahead, which takes the form of a deep water canal with plenty of airspace for about 60 m, the Second Wallows. The route is obvious and suddenly the roof lifts over a deep pool with a cascade plunging into its upstream end. This marks the start of the Inauguration Caverns, to be described in a future part of this description.

Herein lies a second possible trap for the unwary. The route through the Wallows is described above in VERY dry conditions. However only a small